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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 CAIRO 000145

SIPDIS
DRL FOR A/S POSNER
FOR NEA, NEA/ELA AND DRL/NESCA

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [KDEM](#) [EG](#)
SUBJECT: A/S POSNER ENGAGES WITH CIVIL SOCIETY, POLITICAL OPPOSITION

REF: CAIRO 64; CAIRO 47; 09 CAIRO 2111; 09 CAIRO 1997; 09 CAIRO 1977

CLASSIFIED BY: Margaret Scobey, Ambassador; REASON: 1.4(B), (D)

1. Key Points:

-- (C) In meetings January 13-14, A/S Posner told activists and opposition politicians that the U.S. is seeking ways to advance human rights and
-- (C) Activists urged the U.S. to end a "double standard" on Israeli human rights violations, close Guantanamo and speak out against GOE repression.

-- (C) Opposition political leaders agreed that prospects for significant political reform are slim while President Mubarak remains in office. Most expected Mubarak to be a candidate in 2011, and predicted the military would play a role in succession to ensure stability.

-- (C) Former Presidential candidate Ayman Nour urged A/S Posner to press the GOE to stop interfering with opposition political activity, and to allow him to work and travel.

12. (C) A/S Posner told activists the U.S. is interested in how to advance human rights in Egypt over the next 12-18 months to improve people's lives. He said the U.S. would pursue a traditional human rights agenda to address police brutality, restrictions on NGOs, freedom of expression and assembly problems, sectarian tensions, and the State of Emergency. Posner noted that the U.S. is engaged on the coming Egyptian elections, and is working on issues of observation, participation and training. Posner said that the UN Human Rights Council focuses disproportionately on Israel. He described the Goldstone Report as flawed for not being able to include the Israeli government position, and called for Israeli and Palestinian domestic investigations into human rights violations during the Gaza war.

Civil Society Recommendations for the U.S.

13. (C) XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX urged the U.S. to "practice what it preaches" on human rights by closing the Guantanamo Bay prison. Bahgat called on to cooperate with you" on human rights. XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX recommended the State Department human rights report assess that the situation in Egypt declined

Activists' Concerns and Criticism

14. (C) XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX said he was unsure of what current U.S.

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human rights policy is. He expressed concern over lack of U.S. public criticism of Syria for human rights violations, and U.S. support for Yemeni President Saleh while he represses his people. XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX expected increasing GOE repression leading up to the 2010 parliamentary and 2011 presidential elections. XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX said he was

15. (C) XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX asked what the U.S. would do to address expectations that fraud would pervade the 2010 and 2011 elections, and that Gamal Mubarak would inherit power from his father. XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX asserted that U.S. support for the GOE encourages it to repress the Egyptian people. He contended that President's Obama produced "any positive results" in Egypt. XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX criticized the President's speech for "equating women throughout the region with each

16. (C) Noting widespread dissatisfaction with political leaders on all sides, XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX said the 2010 and 2011 elections represented the only opportunity for change, and pressed for more immediate action. He called for greater internal and external pressure on the GOE to increase freedom of assembly and expression, lift the State of Emergency, improve election procedures with electronic voting, and allow registration with national identification cards.

Opposition Political Leaders on Egypt's Future

17. (C) At a dinner with opposition political party leaders, A/S Posner asked about prospects for democratic change. Most expected Mubarak to run in 2011, leaving little room for change. Wafid President Mahmoud Abaza and Democratic Front President Osama Al-Ghazali Harb said they were focused on preparing for a post-Mubarak transition, whenever that may occur. In addition to their plans to participate in the 2010 parliamentary elections, opposition party leaders said they are pressing the GOE and the ruling party for a "national dialogue." The leaders agreed that the military would play a significant role in any post-Mubarak scenario, and that constitutional provisions would be secondary to concerns about internal stability. Leader of the un-registered Reform and Development Party Anwar El-Sadat asserted that the military would not support Gamal Mubarak's succession to the presidency, but that loyalty to President Mubarak kept it from acting to sideline Gamal now. Abaza called Egypt's military "apolitical," but predicted the military would step in to ensure stability if necessary.

18. (C) Regarding U.S. democracy promotion, the group called for

continued support to civil society and "principled" pressure on the GOE. However, Sadat noted sensitivities over "outside interference" in both the regime and opposition camps. Al-Ghad Party Vice-President Wael Nawara suggested that external criticism should be matched with primarily economic "incentives" to encourage the government to commit to concrete democratic reforms.

Former Presidential Candidate Ayman Nour

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19. (C) In a separate meeting, Al-Ghad party founder Ayman Nour said Egyptians were ready for change and seeking leadership. "I'm banned from participating in the coming elections, but I will be part of the pol

10. (U) A/S Posner cleared this message.
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